

**DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

Secretary Roberta Gassman
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-7552
FAX: (608) 266-1784
www.dwd.state.wi.us



**State of Wisconsin
Governor Jim Doyle**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY SERVICES**

Secretary Helene Nelson
1 West Wilson Street
P.O. Box 7850
Madison, WI 53707-7850
Telephone: (608) 266-9622
FAX: (608) 266-7882
www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov

**TO: Economic Support Supervisors
Economic Support Lead Workers
Training Staff
Child Care Coordinators
W-2 Agencies
Workforce Development Boards
Job Center Leads and Managers
Voluntary Agencies
Refugee E&T Agencies**

**FROM: Amy Mendel-Clemens
Communications Section
Bureau of Health Care Eligibility
Division of Health Care Financing**

BHCE/BWP OPERATIONS MEMO

No: 04-36

DATE: 07/12/2004

| | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| FS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | MA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | SC | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CTS | <input type="checkbox"/> | CC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | W-2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| FSET | <input type="checkbox"/> | EA | <input type="checkbox"/> | CF | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| JAL | <input type="checkbox"/> | JC | <input type="checkbox"/> | RAP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| WIA | <input type="checkbox"/> | WtW | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Other EP | <input type="checkbox"/> | ★ | | | |

PRIORITY: HIGH

SUBJECT: 2004 Hmong Refugee Resettlement

CROSS REFERENCE: Operations Memos 00-41, 03-72, 03-81
W-2 Manual Chapter 20

EFFECTIVE DATE: IMMEDIATELY

PURPOSE:

This memo provides information and guidance to Wisconsin Works (W-2), Economic Support (ES) and refugee agencies in anticipation of an increase in Lao-Hmong refugees who will resettle in Wisconsin during the latter half of CY 2004. During the rest of this year, Wisconsin is likely to receive a significant number of additional Lao-Hmong refugees from Thailand, and therefore this is an opportune time to reiterate refugee processes. The guidance in this memo is not a change from current policy.

It should be noted that the policy and procedures in this memo apply to all refugee resettlement populations, unless indicated otherwise. Thus, the term "refugee" is applicable to refugees, asylees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, certain Amerasians, and Victims of Trafficking, unless otherwise indicated.

BACKGROUND

The State Department has recently announced plans to admit into the United States Lao-Hmong refugees who have been living in Thailand. All will undergo health and security screenings prior to admission. It will not be known exactly how many will resettle in Wisconsin until these screenings are completed. However, it is estimated that Wisconsin may receive up to 3,600 Lao-Hmong refugees during the period from July 2004 through December 2004. While the number of refugees anticipated to relocate to Wisconsin in 2004 is a significant increase in resettlement numbers compared to the 2001-2003 time period, it represents less than a 10% increase in Wisconsin's current Hmong population. More detailed information regarding this 2004 Hmong refugee group, including population estimates by Wisconsin county, and general age ranges of the refugee population currently in Thailand, can be found on the DWD Immigrant Integration Section Website at:

http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/programs/refugees/immigrant/immig_integration.htm

Regional Voluntary Resettlement agencies (VOLAGS) contracted by the federal government will usually serve as the first Wisconsin organization to provide refugee resettlement support. VOLAGS are also expected to refer refugees to apply for food stamps, medical assistance, bilingual refugee family E&T support, child care, W-2/FSET and RCA program support. W-2/FSET and RCA case managers will need to work closely together with Refugee case managers to develop dual enrollment co-case management employment and training plans, plus bilingual support services that best support a refugee client and their family within program guidelines and that address duplication of services.

A refugee may have as many as three case managers (from the voluntary agency, the W-2 agency and the refugee employment agency), as well as an interested anchor relative, so it is essential that all work effectively towards the goal of early self-sufficiency. Voluntary resettlement agencies, W-2 and ES agencies and refugee employment and training agencies must coordinate their efforts in order to: ensure an orderly client flow into the system, assure that voluntary agency activities are scheduled and included in the W-2 Employability Plan (EP), and provide for bilingual job development which ensures that refugees obtain employment as quickly as possible.

POLICY

REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE (RCA)

Refugees who meet the income and resource eligibility standards of the W-2 or Medicaid programs, but are not otherwise eligible, such as single individuals, childless couples, and two-parent families with no children under 18 years of age, may receive benefits under the special Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) programs. Eligibility for these special programs is restricted to the first eight months in the U.S.; except for asylees and victims of trafficking. Eligibility begins with the date a certification or eligibility letter is issued by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

Agencies should use the W-2 application form in order to determine eligibility for RCA. Please refer to the W-2 Manual Chapter 20:

www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/manuals/w-2_manual/tables_of_contents/00TOC.htm#chapter%2020

Since CARES currently is not programmed to support the RCA program, W-2 agencies must manually generate RCA payments for up to eight months after entry into this country.

W-2 agencies are reimbursed for their RCA and related administrative costs separate from their W-2 contract allocation. Related payment profiles 0133 and 0134 for W-2 agencies to claim reimbursement for RCA cash and administrative program costs are provided at DWD internet site: http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/core/core_program_codes.htm

Forms for Caseload Reports are also available at:
http://workweb.dwd.state.wi.us/forms/dws/DWSM_2478.htm

They should be sent to:

DWD/DWS
Bureau of Migrant Refugee and Labor Services
201 E Washington Ave G100
Madison WI 53707-7972

RCA Program related notices translated in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Russian, and Hmong are provided at: <http://workweb.dwd.state.wi.us/forms/viewsort/LIST.ASP>

Additional translated materials can be found at Immigrant Integration Section website at http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/programs/refugees/BureauWide/bilingual_materials.htm

W-2 PROGRAM REFERRAL

When new refugees apply for W-2 services the FEP must ask the refugee to identify any supporting Voluntary Resettlement Agency (VOLAG) case workers so that the FEP can contact them to verify the refugee is not participating in the "Match Grant" program. Currently, some refugees in the Milwaukee and Sheboygan areas may receive federal Match Grant program income and services. These refugees are not eligible for W-2 while they are receiving Match Grant support. However, they can become eligible for W-2 support upon completion of the Match Grant period. The FEP should inform the refugee of their potential eligibility for W-2 once the Match Grant period has ended. Refugees may also have received a Resettlement and Placement payment. This income is to be disregarded when determining W-2 financial eligibility.

These refugees will receive family support services, such as life skills training and orientation, provided by the VOLAG during the first 90 days after arrival. The FEP should coordinate initial EP development with the VOLAG and include those activities in the EP.

In addition to W-2 services, refugees will likely be entitled to dual enrollment in the employment and training program provided by a local Refugee Employment and Training (E & T) Agency. If the refugee has not met with the local Refugee E & T Agency, the FEP should contact the agency to connect the refugee to available bilingual E & T services. A listing of local Refugee E & T providers can be found at:
http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/manuals/w-2_manual/appendices/appendix_9/provider_list.htm.

The FEP should coordinate W-2 services with the services provided by the VOLAG and Refugee E & T provider. FEPs should include the VOLAG and Refugee E & T case managers in W-2 employability planning whenever possible. This will allow the FEP to include activities provided by these other agencies in the EP to ensure full and appropriate engagement. A coordinated co-case management approach will connect the participant to appropriate bilingual services as well as prevent duplication of services. Attachment 1 provides a co-case management example of a refugee with dual enrollment in W-2 and Refugee E & T agency work programs.

FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (FSET) SUPPORT

FSET participating refugees are eligible for child care, transportation, and other work related support the same as any other FSET participant. Participation in refugee E&T meets participation requirements for FSET. Also, FSET program participation meets RCA requirements for refugee E&T enrollment.

MEDICAID (MA) AND REFUGEE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (RMA)

Initially, refugees should be tested for all regular MA subprograms, including BadgerCare. See the W-2 Manual (Chapter 20 Refugee Assistance Program)

http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/manuals/w-2_manual/first_page.htm or the MA Handbook (Appendix 15 and 40) <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/em/mahandbook/index.htm> for more information. If the individual fails MA non-financial eligibility then test for RMA eligibility. If the individual fails MA financial eligibility s/he will not meet RMA eligibility either. RMA provides the same medical benefits as full MA. The RMA recipient will also receive a Forward card. Eligibility processing for RMA needs to be done manually using form HCF 10110 (previously DES 3070). The medical status codes that may be applicable for the RMA population are the following:

| MA Subprogram | Med Stat | Center Description | CARES category |
|----------------------------------|----------|---|------------------|
| Refugees, Occasional DOH Funding | 88 | Refugee, no T19, RMAP, no \$ | <i>non-CARES</i> |
| Refugees, Occasional DOH Funding | 89 | Refugee, institutionalized, no T19, RMAP, no \$ | <i>non-CARES</i> |

In the majority of cases, the medical status code “88” should apply. The manual form can be sent to EDS via e-mail address: eds_3070@dhfs.state.wi.us. Once an individual is eligible for RMA s/he is entitled to the benefit for up to eight months from his/her date of entry to the US, not from the date of the RMA application. Do not terminate RMA regardless of any change in the level of income, earnings or source of income including W-2, RCA or employment. Enrollment in Food Stamps or W-2 has no impact on whether a refugee is eligible for RMA.

CHILD DAY CARE

Refugees needing help in finding regulated Child Care should be referred to the local Child Care resource and referral agency. These agencies are aware of the Hmong refugee resettlement and have a current listing of bilingual providers. If there are not enough child care slots for day care that have bilingual Hmong providers, the child care resource and referral agency can coordinate with county day care certifiers in order to certify additional bilingual providers. The W-2 agency should consider training refugee participants to help meet bilingual child care needs, as well as possible placement of W-2 participants in bilingual Head Start and day care centers in order to meet Hmong child care needs related to work program participation.

SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) AND SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INCOME (SSDI)

Refugees who are aged, blind or disabled should be encouraged by all supporting VOLAG, refugee E&T, and W-2 case managers to apply as appropriate for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Disability Income (SSDI). Income Maintenance (IM) and W-2 case workers plus special staff called “Navigators” located at some Job Centers can usually provide guidance to

assist those who are potentially eligible in applying for these federal SSI benefits. These refugees should be informed that current federal laws limit SSI eligibility to seven years after arrival unless citizenship is obtained. Further SSI related information for refugees can be obtained from Operations Memo 03-72 and 03-81. SSI or SSDI recipients are not eligible for W-2 or RCA. If SSI/SSDI is awarded later on to the W-2 or RCA participant, the participant becomes ineligible for W-2 or RCA. In determining financial eligibility in both programs, SSI or SSDI income of other members of the refugee W-2 or RCA group should be included.

WIA PROGRAM YOUTH AND ADULT SERVICES

Many refugee and other low income youth may be eligible for services under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), while their parent(s) are participating in W-2, RCA, or FSET programs. The WIA youth program serves eligible youth between the ages of 14 – 21. Depending on services available locally; refugee youth may be able to obtain tutoring, study skills training, secondary school instruction, dropout prevention services, alternative school services, academic and occupational learning, summer employment, paid/unpaid work internships/job shadowing, occupational skills training, leadership development, mentoring and counseling services. To obtain more information about the WIA youth program and locally offered youth services, it is suggested that the refugee E&T case manager and other interested persons contact the local Job Center or a local WIA youth services contractor found through DWD site: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwdwia/youth/default.htm>.

WIA Adult services can be very effective in providing bilingual skill training, which can provide refugees with career advancement opportunities. Information about WIA adult program services can be obtained by contacting the nearest Wisconsin JOB Center located at: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/directory/default.htm#Cities%20with%20Wisconsin%20Job%20Centers>.

EFFECT OF OTHER SUPPORT FUNDING ON PROGRAMS

FEDERAL RECEPTION & PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE (R&P)

Reception & Placement (R&P) assistance are “one time” payments to refugees during the first 30 days after arrival to the US. The payments are made by the VOLAG on the refugee’s behalf to pay expenses (rent and household items) or issued directly to the refugees. The amount can be up to \$400 per person. These payments can be verified by contacting the VOLAG.

Effect on other programs:

Food Stamps - These one-time payments would be considered non-recurring lump sum payments, and treated as an asset from the date of receipt (FSHB App. 12.02.11).

CC/MA/W-2/RCA /RMA– This payment is disregarded. Agencies must not count it in determining financial eligibility (document in case comments.)

FEDERAL MATCH GRANTS

Match Grant benefits will be offered to refugees in the Milwaukee and Sheboygan areas only. They will be issued by the VOLAG. The Match Grant combines federal funding with matching VOLAG funds which can be used to support refugees in the manner in which the VOLAG

determines. The payments are for months two through four after arrival. The amount of cash received per month from this program can vary per refugee. The VOLAG will need to be contacted to verify the monthly amount that will be issued to the refugee.

Effect on other programs:

FS/MA/RMA/CC - Count as unearned income. Budget as "OT" on AFUI and document the Match Grant in case comments.

W-2/RCA - Refugees who choose to receive cash income or services under the "Match Grant" program are not eligible for W-2 or RCA programs during this period.

NOTE ➤ To correctly deny W-2 eligibility while the refugee family is receiving the Match Grant, use CARES reason code 046. Run eligibility in CARES using reason code 046 on AGOE to override W-2 and confirm the failed W-2. Be sure to go back to ACPA and change the W-2 request from "Y" to "N" and re-run eligibility for confirmation so W-2 does not pop open. Suppress all CARES generated W-2 notices and provide a manual negative notice to the refugee. The manual notice should explain that s/he is not eligible for W-2 or RCA because s/he is receiving the Match Grant funding. Remind the refugee that they can re-apply for W-2 after Match Grant support ends.

REFUGEE CASH ASSISTANCE (RCA)

Refugees with dependents are first tested for W-2 eligibility. If a refugee does not meet the non-financial criteria for W-2, they may be tested for RCA. If a refugee is receiving the Match Grant or SSI benefits s/he is not eligible for RCA. See W-2 Manual Chapter 20 for more information.

Effect on other programs:

FS – Count RCA as unearned income. Budget as "OTFS" on AFUI

CC/MA/RMA – Exempt

W-2 – Refugees determined eligible for RCA would already have been determined ineligible for W-2 due to failure to meet W-2 non-financial criteria.

PROGRAM SUMMARY TABLE

| REFUGEE BENEFIT | FS | CC | MA | RMA | W2 |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| R&P | LU-Asset Disregard | Exempt | Exempt | Exempt | Exempt |
| Match Grant | Income/code OT-AFUI | Income/code OT-AFUI | Income/code OT-AFUI | Income/code OT-AFUI | Inelig-W2 |
| RCA | Income/code OTFS | Exempt | Exempt | Exempt | Inelig-W2 |

NOTE ➤ Make sure to document the source of income in case comments.

CONTACTS

Susan G. Levy, Section Chief
Immigrant Integration Section, Room G100; GEF-1
Department of Workforce Development
Email susan.levy@dwd.state.wi.us
Phone 608-266-8354

DWD/DWS/BDS/SL/RP